ABRAM LINCOLN

AND

SOUTH CAROLINA.

BY J. WAGNER JERMON, ESQ.

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The period has now arrived when it behooves every honest man and American citizen to examine carefully and thoughtfully the present condition of our distracted country. The black cloud of Disunion now hangs like a pall, above us, and threatens with annihilation our whole social, moral, and political horizon. For eighty-four years our noble republic has lived amidst the storms and tempests that have shaken Europe to its centre, exhibiting to the admiring gaze of the whole world, an unexampled instance of prosperity. The question now is, shall this glorious fabric of our Union, erected by those staunch patriots whose names our infant tongues were learned to lisp, be ruthlessly torn asunder, state by state, until the falling timbers become the prey of the traitors false alike to their country and their God? Or, shall we come to the rescue, in our patriot strength, hand in hand, and stand firm upon our constitution, determined that we *will* thwart the few treasonable plotters who are now striving to tear it asunder. True, our present efforts are well nigh paralysed; for never since the first day of our existence as a Union, have

we had an imbecile president, like the present incumbent—James Buchanan. Since the day of his inauguration, his whole course has been marked by fraud and the basest political chicanery. He has violated his oath of office, in which he swore to preserve inviolate the constitution and the Union. He has proved false to his own political friends. He has bestowed office upon the veriest tricksters. He has called into his private cabinet men who were utterly incompetent, and who, had they *been* competent, lacked the moral honesty to carry out the duties assigned them.

The whole country has been greatly mismanaged by him. That James Buchanan has allowed the government funds to be used for party purposes and political capital, no one will deny. My fellow-citizens, then why should our Southern brethren entertain so much fear, and dread the period when the incoming President shall take the reins of government. Can it be possible that he or any other living being can possess less honesty, less virtue, less moral courage and less love of country, than the present incumbent? I fear not.

The time was in our history that the nations of Europe envied our happy and prosperous condition; but, alas! that period has well nigh passed. In the last four years extravagance has marked the conduct of the present administration in every act, and our public treasury has been robbed and plundered under the eye of the President with impunity. Bribery has been allowed to go on in the very halls of our national legislature, in our custom-houses, and in our navy-yards. Is this doubted? Look at the evidence disclosed before the "Covode Committee."

It charges that large sums of money have been extracted under the knowledge and sanction of the present administration.

Had the President been impeached, as he doubtless should have been, he would have been hurled into the retirement of private life under the execrations of an indignant people. Under his theory of "popular sovereignty," the public funds have been expended to force upon a free people a form of government contrary to their rights, and in direct opposition to the constitution of the United States, and in violation of his oath of office in which he was sworn to protect, defend and execute the laws of his country in accordance with the constitution of the Union. If this be "popular sovereignty," God help the people of this or any other country where such a sovereignty may exist. It may be James Buchanan's theory, but it certainly is not republican principles, such as ght us by our noble Washington.

Yes, fellow-citizens, he has d more than this. Whilst he has acknowledged, in his last official message to Congress, that he was vested with authority to execute the federal laws, and crush the arm of treason; and that he would, at all hazards, preserve the public property in the South, he has lacked the courage to exercise that authority and enforce the constitution. Within the last fortnight, he has quietly looked on and seen our flag torn from the public buildings in Charleston; the custom-house, post-office and forts, forcibly taken possession of by a few of the outlaws of South Carolina. And when entreated by the gallant Major Anderson, in command of Fort Moultrie, to send a reinforcement to his aid, he serenely remarked that he did not wish to do any act that would inflame the people

of that state. He was appealed to by the noble wife of that officer, in pathetic language, to save her husband and his gallant little band, from the destruction that hourly threatened them. General Scott, the hero of a thousand battles, appealed to him, for days, in vain, upon the propriety and absolute necessity of sending military aid to Fort Moultrie.

But all these appeals were listened to with a deaf ear by Buchanan, and had it not been for the manly courage and daring bravery of Major Anderson, Fort Sumpter would have been ere now in the hands of the rabble. For such noble conduct on the part of the latter, his name will be a sacred theme for the pen of the historian, when that of James Buchanan shall receive the execration which it so richly merits. Look at the stupendous frauds that have been practiced during his administration! I shall not pretend to enumerate them, for the press contains ample accounts, open to the perusal of all. Within the last few days the sum of *eight hundred and seventy thousand dollars* of Indian trust funds was embezzled by Secretary Floyd and his assistants, Bailey and Russel, under the immediate control and eye of the President, for the purpose of furnishing firearms to the South. He has also allowed large quantities of arms, stacked in the North, to be removed to the South, well knowing that they would be used for treasonable purposes; yet, this same *provident* and *conscientious* President, pretended to be afraid of sending a small reinforcement to Fort Moultrie, lest by so doing, he would fan the flame of secession.

In viewing the conduct of James Buchanan during the last few weeks, my heart well nigh fails me. Surely now is the time

for every honest man, if he possess one spark of patriotism, to stand firm upon the constitution as the rock of his safety. What the present excitement may lead to, no man can tell. The severance of one link that binds the Union together, would be, in itself, insignificant; but when we reflect that other links may be destroyed, and that thus the whole chain that binds our glorious confederacy may be broken; it not only becomes us to pause, but to be moved, in the language of the illustrious Webster, to "*action, action, action.*" If there was ever a time for unity of government it is now. In the language of the Father of his Country, "the unity of government which constitutes us one people, is also *dear* to every man. It is justly so; for it is the main pillar in the edifice of our real independence—the support of our tranquility at home, our peace abroad, of our safety, our prosperity, and of that liberty which we so highly prize."

If the North has violated the laws of the South in depriving them of their property, the constitution affords them ample redress. If any northern state has upon its statute book, any unconstitutional law which conflicts with their laws and interests, the federal courts are open to give them the fullest indemnity for any and every wrong. If any northern state refuses to recognize the fugitive slave law, the federal authorities have the power to enforce it. Then, if this be so, what cause have the South to complain of the North? In most of the cities north of Mason and Dixon's line, the citizens have met in mass, and passed resolutions showing their earnest determination to repeal any and all laws upon their statutes, conflicting with the constitution or the rights of the South. Congress has submitted the question

of their alleged grievances to a committee chosen from all the states, for the purpose of bringing about a reconciliation. This offer upon the part of the North has been spurned with contempt by the South; in fact every conciliatory measure has been tendered to the latter with the same result. They have been called upon again and again to state their grievances, in order that we might be informed as to what rights she desired, but the only response has been—"the day of compromise is forever passed," and that they were determined upon secession. In fact the South have boldly admitted that they wanted *no* indemnity for the past, but for the future. They say that we have elected Abram Lincoln, a black republican or rabid abolitionist, and that, under his administration, their rights will be unprotected.

This must be wholly imaginary on their part, because the principles of Lincoln are identical with those of Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, John Quincy Adams and George Washington. That he is a republican in principle is true; but I deny that he is an abolitionist. He claims that slavery should not be extended, but that it should be protected as a peculiar institution of the South, where it now exists. I cannot believe the declaration of the South in stating that their rights will be ignored under the administration of Mr. Lincoln. On the contrary, they have been solemnly assured by an exposition of his principles, made by him whilst in Congress, in 1848, and throughout his entire political life, that a just enforcement of the constitutional rights should be maintained, both North and South, at all hazards and in defiance of all opposition. They have also assigned, as another reason, that Abram Lincoln was unfit to occupy the presiden-

tial chair; that he is no statesman, totally without experience, and a man of limited education. That when the North nominated him they meant a gross insult to the South. These are a few of the many declarations I heard freely expressed during a recent tour through most of the southern states. It is true that Abram Lincoln, like many of America's greatest sons, was reared in the days when the facilities for education were vastly inferior to those we now enjoy. His life it may well be said furnishes a history of rare mental endowments. It tells what labor may surmount—"the steep where fame's proud temple shines afar;" how, in early life, the obstructions of inauspicious poverty may be encountered and vanquished; how, as the young aspirant moves onward, his hopes may be elevated to cheer his toil; how height after height may be attained and progressive victories won; how the misgivings that so commonly cloud the spirits and darken the path of the young, gradually break away before the march of sturdy industry; and how gratefully these better prospects reward the perseverance by which the goal is reached. It shows, in the language of a great statesman, what "midnight labor and holy emulation" may achieve. It tells us that those who earnestly pursue these noble aims shall find their just reward in the energy and fervor of their own minds; above *all*, it tells how unerringly faith and honor and truth commend their votaries to the applause of the good; what suffrages they collect from the esteem of mankind; what bland and mellow rays of contentment they shed upon the heart, and how they smooth the pathway from infancy to manhood, and from manhood to the grave.

Abram Lincoln, it may be said without derogation, was of lowly parentage, and at an early age, left an orphan upon the cold charities of the world. His was a scanty patrimony, without even an ordinary education or a penny in his pocket. He was left to stem the ills of life in our, then, wilds of the north-western territories. Even in infancy he was a subject of remark amongst those who knew him, and doubtless he then imbibed something of that peculiar tone and feeling which belonged to the plain-living and high-thinking men of other days.

A familiar conversancy with the great principles of human liberty, a stern and uncompromising love of country that did not spend itself in profession, for it broke forth in daily action; frugal habits, ignorance of luxury, and contempt for frivolous manners, little application to the arts of growing rich, and long commingling in public affairs, brave submission to misfortune, patience in privations, and a quick sense of national wrong—are the distinguishing traits of his manhood.

It is pleasant to look back to the early life of men who have arrived at great eminence, that we may endeavor to discern the first faint flickering of that light which has shed in later years, such a glad effulgence, and that we may contrast the germs of power in the infant, with their subsequent development. There is a charm in their days of childhood which marks them as subjects for pleasurable contemplation. Their unheeded ramblings, their thoughtless jollity, their innocence—invest them with a poetical freshness to the musings of manhood. They have the verdure of the spring, and resemble the smooth surface of the meadow, where every blade of verdure, and useful plant, and

every noxious weed shoots up with the same tenderness of fibre, the same hue—and all look fresh and beautiful. The growth of riper seasons distinguishes the good and bad, the useful from the worthless, and furnishes that wide variety of character perceptible to the most careless gazer.

I can fancy Abram Lincoln, when a poor orphan boy, in the days before steamers floated across our western lakes, making his way upon a flatboat, heavily laden with the products of the West, down the majestic father of waters to New Orleans. Upon that glittering stream, like a broad lake, did he see the sylvan pictures of "the land with woody hill, o'er hill encompassed around." There too, he discerned afar off, the western hills, showing their bold crags through which the river had shot its way to meet the tide. From this same point he might look down upon a level plain, where, for many a rood, there lay beneath his eye varied and picturesque landscapes; and far across until it terminated on the margin of the wide waters beyond. This plain, more beautiful from the contrast with the environing hills, that, in gentle slopes or sudden crags, begirt its borders, itself presented a scene to catch the delighted eye of the orphan.

The lowing herds that trooped across these plains; the winding stream that meandered through its coverts; the slow team that laboriously made its way through the scanty harvest field; the long shadows thrown athwart the verdant meadow; the circling nighthawk that darted in swift evolutions in quest of prey; and far along its western confine, the burnished gold of sunset, illumining the river with tints more lovely than the poet's en-

chantment, flings around "the realms of fancy;"—all these images then rose on the young observer's eye, with a witchery that every added year in the progress to manhood robbed of some of its potency. How little did he imagine, that in that sculptured capitol he, himself, the forest wood-chopper, with no higher thought than to toil with his rude axe, should, in the pride of his manhood, be clothed in the highest function in the gift of his countrymen; to which, eminent as it might be, his then unknown genius should impart its highest dignity.

The case of Mr. Lincoln is peculiarly strange, as if propitious Destiny herself had chosen him to carve his way amid the many vicissitudes of fortune up the rugged hill of his country's fame. In his case the reader has a lesson which teaches what a man may do by honest toil and virtuous ambition. It teaches that fortune benumbs the faculties of the young with that most mischievous of diseases—indolence, and leaves the canker of idleness to eat into the mind just at a period when education should be busy to strengthen it for future toils. The day of self-dependence with Mr. Lincoln *threw* him upon his own resources, and by honorable toil and virtuous ambition he pored over the few scanty books in pursuit of knowledge; and there at the fountain of learning, he drank of the waters whose flavor may be found infused into so many of the best exhibitions of the genius he now possesses.

It is remarkable in the character of Mr. Lincoln, that with the most fervent public spirit and the most generous love of country, with talents eminently adapted to the sphere of political life, his ambition never seems to have been dazzled with the lustre of political renown.

Although often urged to enter upon the theatre of politics, and tempted by the most flattering promises both from the public at large and his own particular personal friends, it was with no little difficulty that he was prevailed upon to turn aside from the path he had marked out for himself.

Mr. Lincoln, gifted with a gigantic mind, and with a pure and honest heart, as honest as the light of day, which he has cultivated with an earnest and simple devotion, the refinements of scholarship and the refinement of moral feeling, until his whole character has become one of polished and unspotted transparency. Truth with him has a captivation that no imagery can rival, and nature has a Deity that his soul adores with a fervent worship.

In the recent presidential canvass his name was submitted to the citizens of the United States as a candidate for the chief magistracy of the Union. His nomination was made by a convention of delegates at Chicago from a highly respectable portion of our fellow-citizens. As it was unsought for by Mr. Lincoln, so was it equally unexpected.

In his views of the theory of our government, the chief executive officer of the republic is a station too august to be made the subject of individual solicitation, and, for the same reason, its functions are too important to the common welfare to allow a patriot citizen to decline them, when the wishes of the people invite him to take the public suffrage. This, I understand to be Mr. Lincoln's genuine, unaffected sentiment; and it was, therefore, with him a sense of duty almost invested with the sanctity of a religious obligation, that he accepted his nomination.

From a knowledge of his feelings derived from others, my belief is, that when he accepted of the nomination of the Chicago Convention, he felt that secret convictions of a painful sacrifice of comfort and tranquility which every good man feels when constrained by the call of patriotism to devote his mind, his fortune or his life, in arduous achievement for his country's good. And as it was in this spirit he accepted the nomination, so he did, in the same spirit await the issue of that trial, which was one of the greatest political struggles for the presidential office that was ever known in the history of our Republic. Never did patriot of any country, give himself to his country with a purer heart than did Abram Lincoln. The verdict of his countrymen rendered at the ballot-box has confirmed it.

It is grateful, in these days of much excitement, to contemplate the character of such a man, who has been chosen to be their chief ruler; in these days, when bitter experience has instructed us to distrust all who hold the high, exalted seats of power; when the poisoned politician has thrown the taint of a general suspicion over all who bear the appellation of public servants; when the frequent treachery of the successful demagogue has too often taught us to treat as mockery the progressions of patriotism, and when the boasted virtue, which our forefathers pronounced vital to republicanism, has almost become a mere name of *delusion*,—it is a pleasant thing to cast our thoughts upon the renowned character of a man which has ever encircled his career.

It [illegible]hes us that the the love of homely and old-fashioned worth is not obliterated from the hearts of our countrymen, and

that in the great multitude of our people there is yet a solid mass of right-thinking and plain-dealing men. To that firm phalanx of patriots, in these our days of extremest peril, should disaster fall upon our luxuriant and proud over-arching shelter of liberty, we may appeal. O! that our country may be saved as the chosen land—the last retreat of freedom—the asylum of the poor and the opprest of every clime.